



NATIONAL UNION OF PRINTING, BOOKBINDING AND PAPER WORKERS

74 NIGHTINGALE LANE, LONDON, S.W.12.

GENERAL SECRETARY, W. A. MORRISON, O.B.E.

ALF EVANS CONVALESCENT HOME

BEXHILL ON SEA

“GIVE me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous ” wrote Emerson. We may dismiss the emperors from consideration, but the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers is very much concerned to give its members health. The ramifications of a modern trade union are extensive.

The National Union has the distinction of being the first trade union to provide for its members a convalescent home. It was by the vision of Alf. Evans, more than forty years ago, that this bold venture was successfully established. On 16th June, 1916, the home at Carshalton, that later bore his name, opened its doors.

In 1926 a more suitable property was acquired, Carshalton having “developed into a suburb of London”. The Alf Evans Memorial Home at Hastings was opened in May of that year.

In the meantime (1925) the Union, thinking of its northern members, opened a second home at Filey, Yorkshire, beautifully situated on the cliffs overlooking Filey Bay. This second home, opened on 5th May, 1925, bears the name of the General Secretary of the Union who followed Alf. Evans, Tom Newland.



Front of Home from Esplanade

Going still further north, to serve its Scottish members, the Union opened a third home at Ayr. This stands in nearly four acres of ground, and is only a few minutes walk from the sea. This home was opened on 30th October, 1948, and bears the name of a third, the present, General Secretary, W. A. Morrison.

The Hastings Home was considered to be too far from the sea, and the Executive was not entirely satisfied with the old building. Like most old buildings, it was difficult to administer efficiently. They resolved to make another move, purchased a site on the front at Bexhill and commissioned F. J. D. Daly and F. Burn, architects, to design a building for the purpose.

Well chosen, the site of the new home could not very well be nearer to the sea. The road runs by the beach and immediately by the road is the new building. The position has been described thus : “ The seas break steeply on the beach, rolling among the pebbles which form a barrier stronger than a sea wall. The countryside is open to the warm winds from the south and the west : it basks in the bright sunshine of the Channel coast. It is a peaceful place where men and women may find new health on the shores of this England ”.

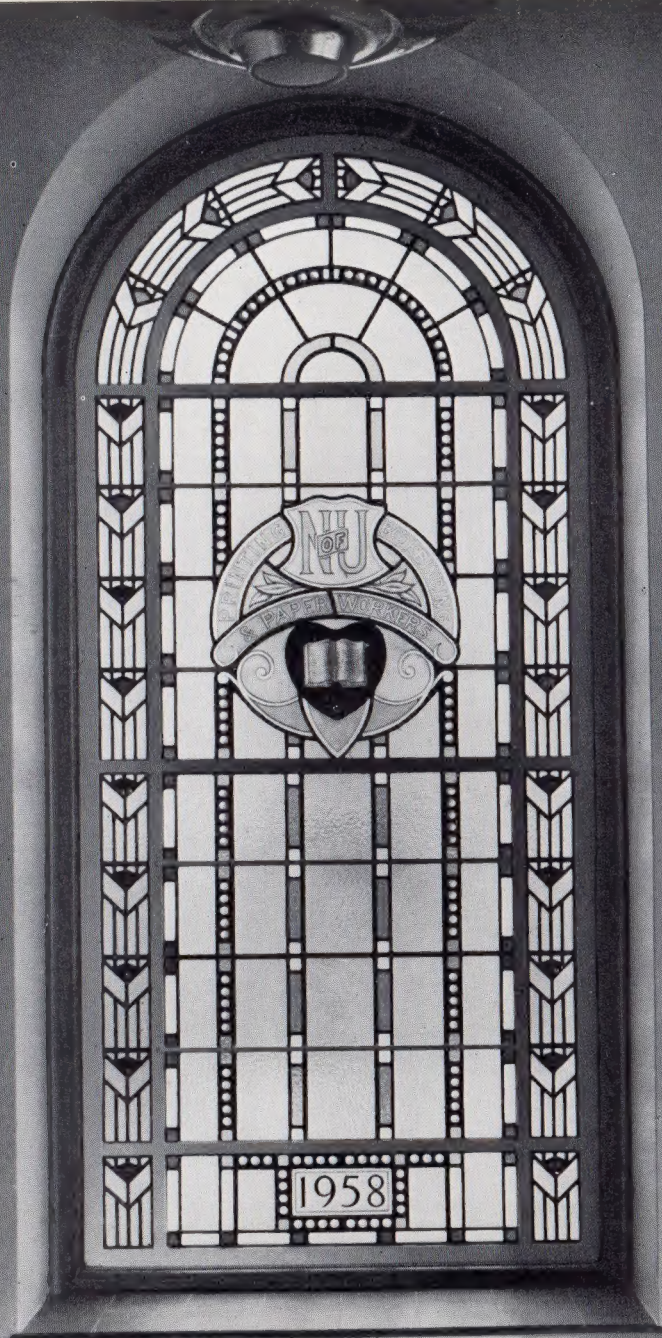


One of the Bedrooms

A member of the London Women's Branch of the National Union put into words, which it would be difficult to improve, the impression made on her by this magnificent enterprise :—

“ When I was there (at the Hastings Home) we went along to Bexhill to see the new home, which is coming along beautifully. I cannot express my thoughts as I would like to, but inside me was a feeling of pride and humility that such a splendid building, and all it stood for, should arise from such a confusion of bricks, tiles, ladders and rubble, to mean so much for the coming generations of printing workers and paper workers to get well again after illness.”

The “ Alf Evans Home ” as the new Bexhill Convalescent Home has so rightly been named, stands in four acres, with an uninterrupted view of the coast line. The imposing building has been constructed so that all the principal rooms, i.e., lounges, dining room and bedrooms, have their windows overlooking the sea, with balconies running the full length of the building. This enables everyone to obtain the maximum benefit from the bracing breezes of Bexhill.



Stained Glass Window in Dining Room.

On entering the hall, which has a bright sunny atmosphere, one turns into the main lounge, which is spacious, tastefully decorated, and has a commanding semi-circular window. Adjacent to this are two lounges, one for the women and the other for the men.

The dining room, which will seat sixty, has a stained glass window at the east end, incorporating the Union badge. This window throws a continuous muted yellow glow down the entire length of the room and the decor of the walls and ceiling has been carefully chosen to harmonise with the colouring of the badge. The floor is finished in Rhodesian teak.

There is sufficient accommodation for thirty men and thirty women, in four-bedded, twin-bedded and single rooms. In each case there are built-in individual wardrobes, dressing tables and wash-basins, the floors being finished with polished hard-wood blocks.

With the complete comfort and enjoyment of the members in mind, a large Games Room, with two full-sized billiard tables and sufficient room for darts, etc., etc., has been provided. Next to this is the television room. These rooms are on the lower ground floor.

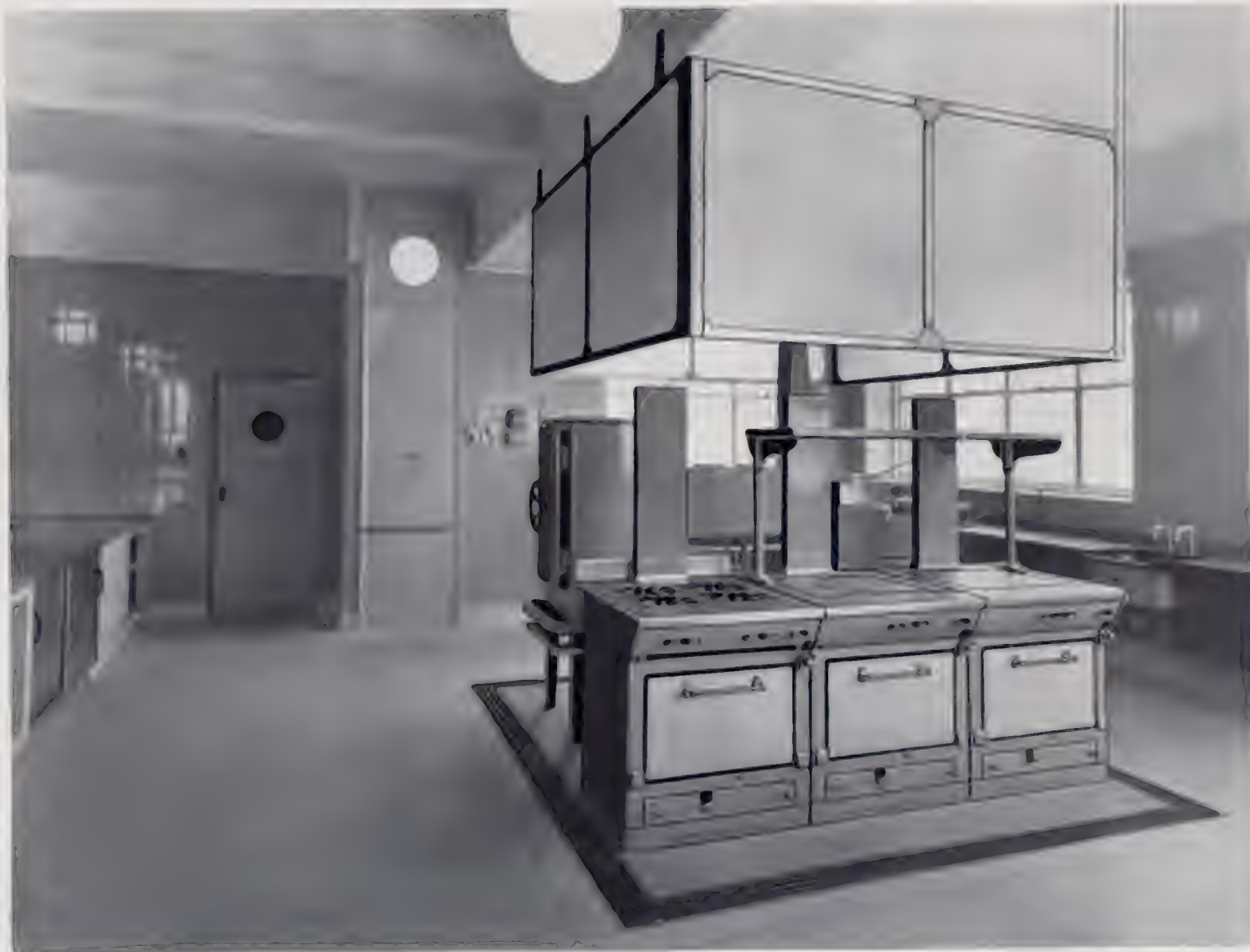


One of the Corridors

We would also mention that on this floor is one of the most modern Boiler Houses, with storage tanks to hold 6,000 gallons of oil, which provides central heating and domestic water supply for the building.

The kitchen is both spacious and airy, and contains modern dish-washing and refrigerating plants, plus ranges, steamers, etc. There is an efficient ventilating system, constructed to prevent fumes penetrating to any other part of the building. Realising how important it is to work in congenial surroundings, the architects designed these quarters with pale grey tiled walls and terrazzo floors, all of which are conducive to happy working conditions. There is a staff dining room adjoining the kitchen.

One could so easily continue expounding the virtues of various aspects of the Home, such as the very fine shallow carpeted main staircase, which has two rather unusual windows ; also the Matron's, Assistant Matron's and Staff quarters, all delightfully designed for comfort. The gardens, which have been tastefully laid out, contain a fishpool, fountain, rose gardens, lawns, putting green, also seats are placed in various positions around the grounds. There is, of course, an excellent kitchen garden, including orchard, greenhouses, etc. The



View of the Kitchen

boundary wall has been constructed in Sussex stone, with pleasing “ grilles ” introduced into same. Also in the garden is the bronze bust of “ Alf Evans ”, which was carefully removed from the Convalescent Home at Hastings, and has been suitably inscribed for its present position.

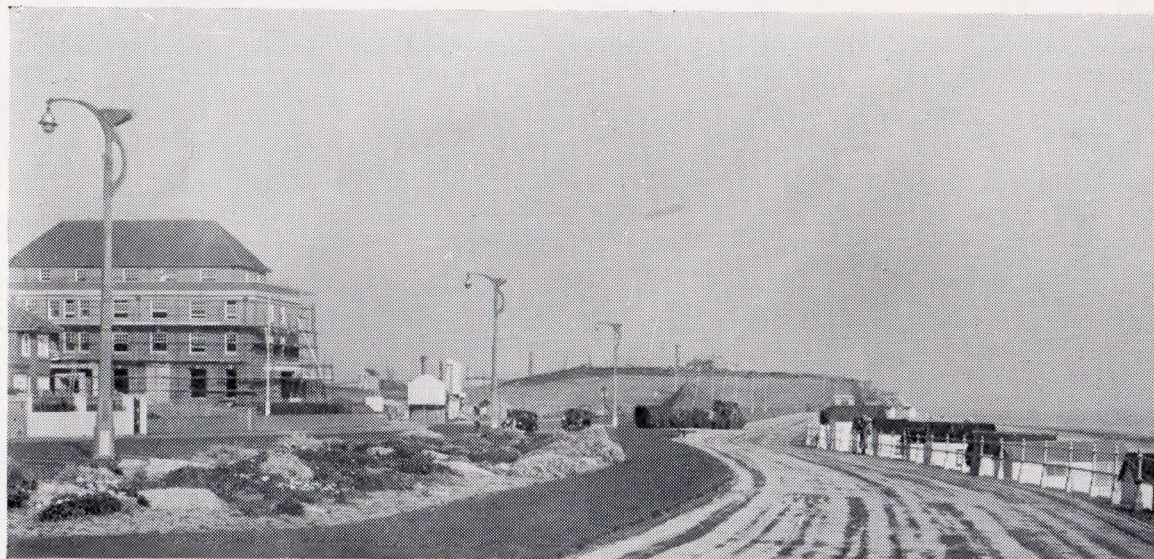
A note of interest is that, during construction, the contractors, Messrs. Walter Llewellyn & Sons, Ltd., installed a very modern crane (this, incidentally, attracted large numbers of sightseers !) which helped considerably with the erection of 160 tons of steel and enabled them to use 600,000 “ packed ” bricks. These were not touched by hand from the brickworks until reaching the bricklayers.

The building has reinforced concrete foundations and load bearing walls which are faced with brickwork forming a 2” cavity around the building. The roof is set back from the main front of the building, forming a balcony for the upper floors and is finished in hand-made clay tiles, all of which enhance the very delightful appearance of this new

“ ALF EVANS CONVALESCENT HOME ”



View from Cantelupe Road, showing Rock Gardens and Putting Green



GROWING FOR THE HEALTH OF THE MEMBERS

